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'Assurance' on B26 Smuggling Related

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BUFFALO, N. Y.—The friend who got John Richard Hawke a job flying B26 bombers to Portugal assured him the operation had the blessing of the U.S. government.

Martin Caidin, a prolific aviation writer and the legal sponsor for the British-born Hawke, and his wife, Jean, in this country, testified yesterday that he told Hawke early last year that the B26 operation presented a "tremendous opportunity."

Board had obtained agreement between the two governments" (Portugal and the U.S.), Caidin testified under direct examination by Hawke's attorney, Edwin Marger, at the trial of the two men charged with conspiring to export seven of the bombers illegally. Later, he said, Board told him the agreement had been reached.

"Did you tell John Hawke this was being done for the U.S. government?" Marger asked. Caidin said he had.

But when he was asked whether he had been told directly by anyone other than Board, the alleged mastermind of the deal, that the Central Intelligence Agency was involved, Caidin said he had not.

However, he said he mentioned the operation to Air Force officers before the flights and that he discussed it in detail with both a CIA agent in New York and an Air Force security officer in Florida after Hawke's arrest.

At one point, he said, the Air Force officer, whom he identified as Col. Charles Callahan,

a security officer at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla., told him to "stop rocking the boat, stop putting on pressure."

"He said the Air Force had directed him to cease further communication with me unless the Air Force was involved. I told him it was," Caidin said.

Caidin said he was convinced the CIA was involved in the operation because Board told him so and, because of his own previous unpaid role as a source of information for the CIA, he was sure "there is no other way these planes could have been flown out of the country."

Under cross examination by U.S. Attorney John T. Curtin, however, Caidin said he had given Hawks a stern warning about his involvement in the operation. He acknowledged that, in an interview with a customs agent, he had said:

"I said . . . 'be sure to get your damn money for your flight each time and while . . . this is a wild-air operation, make sure you get paid for each flight as it goes on.'"

Hawke, a bearded ex-Royal Air Force fighter pilot who flew seven of the bombers from Tuscon, Ariz., to a Portuguese airfield near Lisbon between May and August of last year, has insisted since the time of his arrest that he was certain he was working for the CIA.

On trial with Hawke is Henri Marin de Montmarin, a tall, distinguished-looking French count who allegedly acted as a go-between in the deal.

Subpoened as a witness for the defense are CIA Director Richard Helms, who is expected to be represented by the CIA's chief counsel, Lawrence R. Houston, and Richard M. Bissell Jr., former deputy director of the CIA.